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Friday, 21 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 134

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/722)

The President: I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Santiago Wins of Uruguay, to introduce the report of the Fifth Committee on this sub-item.

Mr. Wins (Uruguay), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*spoke in Spanish*): During the main part of the fifty-sixth session, the Fifth Committee considered the financing of five peacekeeping operations. The report before the Assembly (A/56/722) relates to the financing of United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East, in this instance the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The Committee adopted a draft resolution on this sub-item by a recorded vote of 110 votes in favour to 2 against. In paragraph 11 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of that draft resolution.

Before concluding, I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to the fact that, in accordance with established practice, expenses incurred in support of peacekeeping activities at Headquarters — which are financed through the support account for peacekeeping operations — are paid through the apportionment of the support account's expenses in financing each individual peacekeeping operation.

At present, the Fifth Committee is still considering additional requirements for the support account, derived from a broad examination of all of the issues involved in peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. Until the Fifth Committee takes a decision on additional resources for the savings account, the amount needed for those additional requirements will not be able to be drawn from the support account for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

For that reason, there are blanks in the draft resolution where the requisite references to the amounts to be allocated or assessed are to be filled in. Those references will be inserted once the portion pertaining to the UNIFIL support account has been determined.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee which is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-71165 (E)

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with the General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

I give the floor to the representative of Israel, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Adam (Israel): I should like to refer to four paragraphs of this draft.

My delegation's position with regard to the incident at Qana is well known and has been articulated before the Assembly and the Fifth Committee on several occasions.

Allow me to reiterate several essential points.

The draft resolution before the Assembly today blatantly violates the principle of collective responsibility, which dictates that costs resulting from peacekeeping operations are to be shared equally among Member States. This is the only time in history that one Member has been singled out to bear the sole financial burden of costs resulting from peacekeeping operations.

The reason behind this principle is fairly obvious. When peacekeepers are deployed in areas of conflict, it is with a full understanding of the dangers inherent in such a task. As such, any damage that is incurred should be absorbed by the general budget for peacekeeping operations, in accordance with the principle of collective responsibility and accepted practice.

I should like to point out that, since the first United Nations peacekeeping operation, there have been several incidents in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere in which damage occurred to the property of a peacekeeping operation. In these incidents, no one has sought to place sole financial responsibility on the shoulders of one Member State. Our case should not be treated any differently.

The representative of Lebanon referred, during the debate in the Fifth Committee, to a report (S/1996/337) dated 7 May 1996 prepared by Franklin Van Kappen, a military adviser for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He did so by selectively quoting from the text in a manner that served his purposes, while ignoring other paragraphs to which I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly.

In paragraph 9 of that report, the following sequence of events is detailed:

> "(a) Between 1200 and 1400 hours on 18 April, Hezbollah fighters fired two or three rockets from a location 350 metres south-east of the United Nations compound."

The rockets were targeted at cities and villages in northern Israel.

> "(b) Between 1230 and 1300 hours, they fired four or five rockets from a location 600 metres south-east of the compound. The location was identified on the ground.
>
> "(c) About 15 minutes before the shelling, the Hezbollah fired between five and eight rounds of 120-millimetre mortar from a location 220 metres south-west of the centre of the compound. The location was identified on the ground. According to witnesses, the mortar was installed there between 1100 and 1200 hours that day, but no action was taken by [United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon] personnel to remove it. On 15 April, a Fijian had been shot in the chest as he tried to prevent Hezbollah fighters from firing rockets.
>
> "At some point ... two or three Hezbollah fighters entered the United Nations compound."

Although the conclusions of the report of the United Nations Secretariat were vague on the question

of responsibility, it nevertheless made clear that Hezbollah aggressed against the State of Israel from Lebanese territory from a position in dangerous proximity to the United Nations compound.

Needless to say, my country — like any other sovereign State in the world — cannot and will not tolerate rockets falling on its territory and will not stand by while people are being killed. Every country in this situation would exercise its sovereign right of self-defence, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization included on the list of the United States Department of State. Hezbollah operates in the Beka'a valley in Lebanon and has established cells in Europe, Africa, South America, North America and Asia. This terrorist organization deliberately positioned itself in close proximity to the compound, knowing full well that civilians, including children, had taken refuge there and that their operations would imperil their safety, in blatant violation of the principles of international humanitarian law.

Israel regrets that United Nations peacekeeping operations were caught in this crossfire. This, unfortunately, occurs in instances when peacekeeping operations are deployed in areas of conflict, especially in a situation such as this one, in which a guerrilla force deliberately attempts to draw fire towards the peacekeeping operation.

But beyond this issue of financing compensation, there is an even greater issue at stake: the politicization of the work of the Fifth Committee. The insertion of politically motivated elements into this draft resolution will prevent us from adopting it by consensus.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that, although we will be voting against this draft resolution, Israel has fully cooperated with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and supports the approval of its budget. We are hopeful that the coming months will see UNIFIL fulfil all aspects of its mandate and the Government of Lebanon assume its responsibility in the southern region up to the blue line, so that we will all benefit from the return of peace and security along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon".

A single separate vote has been requested on the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 3, 4 and 13 of the draft resolution. As there is no objection to that request, I shall put to the vote the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 3, 4 and 13.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

The fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 3, 4 and 13 were retained by 68 votes to 2, with 54 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Guyana informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu.

The draft resolution was adopted by 123 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/214).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Guyana informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I call on the representative of the United States for an explanation of vote.

Mrs. Marcus (United States): The United States strongly supports the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon as it continues efforts to implement a difficult and important mandate. Because this resolution is procedurally flawed and politicizes the work of the Fifth Committee, we were forced to vote against it.

We opposed General Assembly resolutions 55/180 B, 55/180 A, 54/267, 53/227, 52/237 and 51/233 because they similarly contained sections which require a Member State to pay for costs stemming from the Qana incident several years. These resolutions were not consensus resolutions.

The use of General Assembly funding resolutions to pursue claims against a Member State is not procedurally correct. Since shortly after the United Nations inception, the procedure which has been followed is that the Secretary-General presents and pursues the settlement of claims against a State or States. This procedure has been applied before in the Middle East and continues for peacekeeping-related damage claims in the Balkans.

Using a funding resolution to legislate a settlement is thus inappropriate. We hope that, in the future, such politicization can be avoided.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to respond to the falsehoods contained in the statement made earlier by the representative of Israel.

The representative of Israel referred at the outset of her statement to the principle of collective responsibility. We are in full agreement with that principle, under which the costs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations throughout the world should be collectively shared. This principle is enshrined in the United Nations Charter and no one can deny it. We are fully in compliance with it.

We would pose the following question: Is it possible, on the basis of the principle of collective responsibility, to conclude that a State, regardless of its status, may deliberately — and I insist on the word "deliberately" — bombard a United Nations compound and then ask other States, on the basis of that principle, to pay for the damage that it intentionally caused?

The principle of collective responsibility does not contradict the principle of international responsibility, by which any State that may damage or harm another State or an international organization, such as the United Nations, must pay reparations. The desired result of holding Israel internationally responsible is to deter it from launching a similar action in the future. This is fully in accord with all the reports of the Secretary-General, which insist on the need to ensure the security and stability of all peacekeeping operations throughout the world. Paragraph 20 of the resolution just adopted encourages the Secretary-General to ensure the safety and security of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

How can peacekeeping operations be protected when a State is not held responsible for launching 36 artillery shells at an international compound? In the report that was before the Fifth Committee a few days ago, the Secretary-General says that we must send a clear message to the effect that attacks on humanitarian personnel cannot be made with impunity. The Group of 77 is ensuring this by calling on Israel to pay reparations not to Lebanon, but to this Organization, which it attacked and of which it is a Member.

As for what the representative of Israel said regarding the military consultant's statement, I would like to say that for the first time, Israel is recognizing the military consultant's report. For the past five years, Israel refused to acknowledge the existence of this report. Now the representative of Israel is using it against my country.

In this connection, Israel should not be selective by acknowledging certain paragraphs of the report while ignoring others. We accept the whole report — we are unashamed of our resistance for the liberation of our land. The representative of Israel is not in a position to instruct others. Israel has no right to occupy territory belonging to others and then attempt to dictate what they should and should not do. Before dictating to others, Israel must first desist from forcefully occupying their territory and must respect the rules of international legitimacy.

With regard to the description of terrorism by the representative of Israel, we refer him to the General Assembly resolutions that give all peoples the right to self-determination and to liberation of their land. The concepts of resistance and terrorism should not be confused. Had it not been for the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, there would have been no resistance. Resistance came as the result of occupation.

As for politicization, we are of the view that the paragraphs of the resolution do not contain political language and that the requested compensation is not owed to my country but to the United Nations. Had we asked for compensation for our martyrs, it could have been said that we were politicizing the issue, but since the compensation is owed to the United Nations, it cannot be said that we are doing so.

Finally, with regard to the statement of the Israeli delegate about achieving peace in the region, we all wish for that. All of us, including the representative of Israel, know that in order for peace to be achieved, the resolutions of international legitimacy must be applied and Israel must withdraw from all occupied Arab territories. This is the cause for which 244 United Nations troops have died in southern Lebanon.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Adam (Israel): First of all, we welcome and fully respect the message of peace by the delegate of Lebanon. However, to say that Hizbullah, Al Qaeda or any other terrorist organization is a resistance organization is, of course, not proper. I would like to raise three points to remind the delegate of Lebanon in this regard.

In the aftermath of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, in full and confirmed compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), any remaining responsibilities under the resolution fell on the Government of Lebanon to reassert its effective authority in the south and to restore international peace and security along the Blue Line. We withdrew totally from Lebanese territory. Neither of these obligations has been met, despite repeated calls by the Security Council and the

Secretary-General for Lebanon to conform to the will of the international community.

As a result, southern Lebanon remains one of the world's most vigorous bastions of terrorist activity. Hizbullah terrorists occupied posts immediately after they had been vacated by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and before that by Israeli forces, thereby gaining free rein to carry out attacks against Israel at will. Hizbullah's actions are destabilizing the area along the Blue Line, endangering the lives of United Nations personnel in the area, and they constitute a threat to international peace and security.

The attack just levelled against my country by the Lebanese representative is a thinly veiled attempt to divert attention from Lebanon's failure to live up to its international responsibilities and the danger to lives and property resulting from that failure. It is further meant to distract from the fact that as the world unites to combat the threat of terrorism, Lebanon has yielded large portions of its territory to a recognized terrorist organization responsible for the death of civilians on several continents.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): What the representative of Israel has said forces us to reply to the distortions and errors in his statement.

The representative of Israel tries to represent its withdrawal from southern Lebanon as if it were a favour or service that it did for the world. Everyone knows, however, that Israel would never have withdrawn its forces from Lebanon had it not been for Lebanon's valiant resistance against Israel. If Israel withdrew from Lebanon in conformity with resolution 425 (1978), why did it wait 22 years to do so instead of withdrawing immediately after the resolution was adopted? If Israel had respected and complied with the provisions of that resolution, there would have been no need for resistance to dislodge its forces from that part of my country. Moreover, if Israel was keen on applying United Nations resolutions, then we would present it with a bundle of international resolutions that are waiting to be applied. There are such resolutions as 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 194 (III) of 1948 and many more.

Regarding what the representative of Israel said concerning violations of the Blue Line drawn by the United Nations, I would like to make available to the Assembly dozens of documents that were issued, not by my Mission but by the United Nations and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in southern Lebanon. The most recent of these is dated Beirut, 20 December. I would like to provide the Assembly with these documents so that the representative of Israel can take note of them. Permit me to read a part of one such document:

(*spoke in English*)

> "The Blue Line and Lebanese airspace were violated yesterday by one Israeli military jet.
>
> "In this connection, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for southern Lebanon, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, again calls upon the Israeli authorities to cease such air violations and to fully respect the Blue Line."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

The Blue Line has not been respected. There are dozens of documents that I would like to make available to the Assembly so that the representative of Israel can study them.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Nakkari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Every year we hear the same misleading statements from the representative of the occupying Israeli forces. However, bearing in mind that brevity is the soul of wit, I would like to say merely that I agree entirely with the comments made by the representative of Lebanon in both his first and second statements in exercise of the right of reply. His response was eloquent, and served as a frank rebuttal of all the allegations and slanderous comments made.

In this connection, I would like to reaffirm the right of peoples to self-determination and to take action to remove the occupying force from their territory. It seems that an attempt is now being made to distort facts and to say that the opposite is true, and that people who are defending their territory are occupiers and aggressors. That is a slanderous claim. I agree with the representative of Lebanon that if it had not been for the valiant national resistance of the Lebanese people, Israel would never have withdrawn from Lebanese territory. Israel was forced to withdraw.

The truth of my comments is borne out by the many resolutions adopted by this Organization that have not yet been implemented by Israel. Those

resolutions have not been implemented because of the attitude taken by Israel, which is completely at odds with international law.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 40

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Draft resolution (A/56/L.65)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.65.

Mr. Kušljugić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Since 1992 the General Assembly and the Security Council have regularly considered and discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That fact indicates that the problems in my country were of major international importance. In the resolutions adopted, the causes of the problems were explicitly addressed and actions aimed at improving the situation recommended. This year the situation in my country has been discussed in the General Assembly and the Security Council under agenda items relating to reports of the Office of the High Representative, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) and the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, all of which addressed specific aspects of the situation in my country.

The draft resolution before us today is being presented on behalf of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and has been co-sponsored by Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States and Yugoslavia.

The draft resolution gives an overall picture of the current situation and of the progress achieved last year, and emphasizes the need for a holistic and coordinated approach to future activities. In general, there was significant progress last year in the implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement. That was the result of joint efforts by the international community and the new democratic, multi-ethnic, European-oriented Government of the Democratic Alliance for Change. The partnership and the relations that have been established demonstrate that the comprehensive engagement of the international community, which complements the work of elected officials and other local stakeholders, is the only working model that can heal the wounds inflicted by the conflict and put the country on the path to reconciliation, stabilization and recovery.

My country has thus gradually ceased to be a major international problem, and more and more it is becoming a possible model for the resolution of numerous regional and global conflicts. Hence, the full implementation of the Peace Agreement and the development of a sustainable, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina which will be a model for the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups, confessions and cultures is a special challenge for the international community, too. Of course, the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and the continuous adjustments to and upgrading of our legal framework in accordance with European standards, is the foundation of the activities of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels. The success of this mission is an indispensable prerequisite for stabilization and development in the region of South-Eastern Europe.

However, we consider the progress achieved last year to be only the first step in the long-term transition process from war to peace, from a destroyed economy to sustainable development, from the rule of rulers to the rule of law. The driving force in this process is the vision of a functioning, democratic, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, integrated into the region and into European structures.

The first priority in this process is to fully establish the rule of law. We would like to take this opportunity to note the efforts of international entities, especially UNMIBH, which have facilitated the action of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to achieving that goal. We would like to emphasize the positive results achieved in restructuring the police and strengthening the judicial system. We would also like to recall the prompt action of the State and entity institutions in adopting the comprehensive

plan of action to prevent terrorist activities, increase security and protect people and property in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which underlines the active role of our country within the alliance against terrorism. We appreciate the assistance provided by the international community in this regard, especially in connection with the establishment of the State Border Service, and we expect further support for these activities in the next year.

The decision taken by the Constitutional Court relating to the equality of all three constituent peoples throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a cornerstone for the substantial improvement of human rights. However, the delayed implementation of the decision indicates that further support from the international community might be needed to ensure the adoption of necessary constitutional changes in the State and entity parliaments.

We are fully aware that, without far-reaching economic reform, positive achievements in many areas could be jeopardized. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are determined to create a self-sustaining, market-oriented economy, operating in a single economic space; to complete, as soon as possible, the process of privatization; to improve banking and capital arkets; to reform the financial system; and to provide adequate social protection. It is obvious that only the successful completion of economic reforms in the period to come will strengthen peace and stability in the country. Because of that fact, we urge the international community to provide further necessary assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, using the positive experience of other countries. We also realize that corruption and the lack of transparency seriously hamper economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we expect that the restructured police and judiciary system will combat corruption and other illegal activities more successfully.

The fulfilment of annex VII of the Peace Agreement is another task that is very much linked with the success of economic recovery and the establishment of the rule of law. The results of the last two years are encouraging, and we should not lose momentum. It is evident that security in general has been improved significantly throughout the country. We have seen a considerable increase in the number of returnees in the first 10 months of the year 2001, in comparison with the year 2000. Further progress should be made in the work of the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees, and we expect all sides to implement the property laws adopted on 27 October 1999.

We also recognize the importance of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and we are taking into account the orders and requests of the ICTY. We also urge Member States to offer their full support to the Tribunal, particularly with regard to the surrender of all indictees and adequate financial support in order to ensure achievement of the purposes of the Tribunal and relevant Security Council resolutions. We welcome the ICTY's proposal to develop, in close cooperation with the international community, national court capacities to investigate and prosecute the cases of war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the continual efforts by the International Committee of the Red Cross on the issue of missing persons.

Once again, we would like to emphasize that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in integrating into the Euro-Atlantic structures and improving regional cooperation. The crucial event in the next year in the development of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be its admission into the Council of Europe. We have fulfilled the conditions of membership in the Council of Europe, including the adoption of the electoral law. We have also made considerable progress in fulfilling the conditions listed in the Road Map towards a feasibility study for the European Union Stabilization and Association Agreement. Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities have defined a common defence policy and declared the intention to commence the process of formally joining the Partnership for Peace.

Overall mutual cooperation among the successor States of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and with the region as a whole, has been improved further with the agreement reached in Vienna regarding succession and with its implementation, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the strengthening of the Stability Pact commitments after the high-level conference held in Bucharest on 20 November 2001.

The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to work together with the international community to fulfil the vision of developing a modern, democratic, multi-ethnic, viable European country. We are looking with such a vision at the important challenges and tremendous tasks ahead of us. We are already implementing a specific entry strategy to integrate the country with the rest of Europe. We hope that, in the near future, we will be able to solve our problems without substantial international assistance. In that regard, we also welcome the intention of the international community — and especially the United Nations — to design a specific exit strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are fully convinced that the European entry strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina is at the same time an exit strategy for the substantial presence of the international community.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on the draft resolution on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the Assembly today.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries belonging to the European Economic Area, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

I would first of all like to thank Mr. Wolfgang Petritsch, the High Representative of the international community, for the outstanding work he has done to date in implementing the Dayton Agreements. Our thanks also go to all those who have provided help and support in that task, in particular, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), the International Police Task Force (IPTF), the Stabilization Force (SFOR), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Their daily efforts play a major role in the process of rebuilding a multi-ethnic and peaceful Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the whole, the European Union is satisfied with the progress made in implementing the Dayton Agreements. The positive results achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina are reflected in the draft resolution before us today.

Much progress has been made since a resolution was adopted on under this agenda item in the General Assembly, during the fifty-fifth session. Above all, past efforts have been consolidated. However, we must stress once again that responsible political management combined with total and immediate determination to implement institutional, legal and economic reforms in full are essential prerequisites for full implementation of the Dayton Agreements and the rapid integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into European Union structures.

We warmly welcomed the adoption of the electoral law by the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina last August. This basic building block of any democratic State or society was sorely lacking. Its adoption marks the beginning of a new stage in the redefinition of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an autonomous and multi-ethnic State. It is a step towards Bosnia and Herzegovina's admission to the Council of Europe, as well as a step towards European institutions in the spirit of the Road Map laid out at the Zagreb summit in November 2000.

We strongly urge Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue with the implementation of that Road Map, particularly with regard to the economic situation, which still requires further improvement. Economic growth should continue to be stimulated, and the welfare of its citizens must be improved. As the draft resolution stresses, corruption and lack of transparency must be vigorously combated in order to ensure the country's economic development. A similar battle must be waged against the evils of smuggling, trafficking in human beings and organized crime, scourges that must be urgently eradicated.

Generally speaking, progress has been made in helping refugees return to all parts of the country. In that connection, we would encourage the High Representative to continue his campaign to raise the awareness of international, national and local institutions in order to step up their cooperation in this regard. We welcome all the national and regional initiatives taken to help refugees return to the region. Moreover, we strongly condemn all acts of intimidation, violence and murder, especially those intended to deter refugees and displaced persons from returning voluntarily.

The European Union has great interest in cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal

for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). We renew our call to all the parties concerned, without exception, to do their utmost to support the Tribunal's endeavours and to surrender indictees immediately.

We continue to support the work of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly the measures he has taken, or will have to take, to tackle obstructionism. No obstacle can be allowed to stand in the way of the implementation of the Dayton Agreements, and it is of paramount importance that the High Representative should be able to continue to oversee that process.

With regard to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), we had an opportunity to discuss the subject of rationalizing that Mission at a recent meeting of the Security Council. At the current pace, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina should complete its core tasks by the end of its mandate in December 2002. Then, monitoring and assistance activities will be undertaken. The European Union appreciates and supports the comprehensive approach of the High Representative towards restructuring the current civilian presence on the ground. The transition must be planned intelligently, and we all must explore possible ways of streamlining the international community's presence on the ground. Here, there are two goals to be borne in mind: effectiveness and coordination.

The encouraging developments in the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina are taking place in the framework of a regional trend towards stability and peace. At the regional level, the European Union promotes cooperation projects, supports economic integration and encourages firmer anchoring to Europe under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. The Zagreb Summit, held in November 2000, which resulted in the formulation of a road map for Europe, fostered progress towards that rapprochement and made it possible to consider the region as a whole.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to peace and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its commitment throughout the region. The European Union is the principal troop contributor, the chief donor and the main provider of technical assistance. The results so far have been very heartening and confirm the European Union in its intention to continue its engagement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): Turkey has aligned itself with the statement just made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I shall confine myself to brief comments on the points which we think are of particular importance from my country's perspective.

I should like at the outset to remind the Assembly that Turkey, itself a Balkan country, has always been directly involved in efforts seeking the establishment of peace and stability in the Balkans. Fostering friendly relations and cooperation among the countries of the region was and remains the most reliable and productive avenue to that end. Within that larger picture, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been at the forefront of our concerns, given our shared history and the ties that we have consistently fostered.

Developments over the past year attest to the relevance of reaching the key strategic targets set for Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Peace Implementation Council, namely the consolidation of State institutions, the pursuit of economic reform and the return of refugees and displaced persons. Turkey, as a member of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, strongly believes that reaching lasting solutions is dependent upon the attainment of those targets. The way to reach them is through the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords. We cannot fail to acknowledge the many accomplishments made to date in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Accords; nor, however, can we deny that much remains to be done in that respect.

Mutual confidence among Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs remains the key to achieving lasting peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is the duty of all leaders representing their peoples at the cantonal, entity and State levels to work hard for the political stability and economic development of the country. At the same time, they, along with the people who constitute Bosnia and Herzegovina, should resist all attempts by any group to derail the process towards normalcy. We believe that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina should and can meet this historic challenge.

There have been many important positive developments in the course of the past year, some of which I wish to highlight here. There has been major progress in efforts both by the international community and by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and

Herzegovina to conclude the power transfer process in conformity with the principle of ownership. In that context, the partnership forum and the civic forum are useful mechanisms that should be resorted to. We welcome the adoption of the election law, because that was a key condition set by the Parliamentary Assembly for accession to the Council of Europe. Passage of the election law brings Bosnia and Herzegovina a significant step closer to accession to that organization. We hope that this will be followed by speedy completion of the ongoing constitutional reform.

The return of refugees and displaced persons is the litmus test of the Dayton Accords. The improved security conditions and the more cooperative and receptive political mindset that should prevail in some areas, as well as country-wide implementation of property legislation, could have a positive effect on returns.

We also welcome the apprehension of a considerable number of indicted war criminals. However, many more are still at large. On that issue, we need the cooperation of the respective Governments. Inter-ethnic respect and confidence need to be consolidated by the handover of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić to justice.

We support efforts to reconfigure the presence of the international community, to be devised in accordance with functional parameters. The international community requires much better mechanisms for policy-making and coordination. In that context, as one of the main contributors of civilian police to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are closely following plans for the post-Mission period. I would also like to stress the ongoing need for the international community to be firmly involved in efforts to ensure the sustainable development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We cannot forsake such support for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina while their country moves into a crucial stage towards becoming a full member of the European family of nations.

The commitment of the international community to the military implementation of the Dayton Accords has been instrumental in consolidating safety, security and stability in the region. Turkey has played an energetic role in that regard through its presence in the multinational stabilization force (SFOR). The continued commitment of the international community to that aspect of the Dayton arrangements remains an essential element in attaining lasting peace.

Mr. Yahaya (Malaysia): My delegation is gratified that the general situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has improved substantially. Nevertheless, we should not be complacent or contented, because much more needs to be done. The physical and psychological devastation and destruction of the country will have to be urgently addressed so as to expedite the process of rehabilitation and healing. Sustainable peace and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina require the right political, economic and social atmosphere. In that regard, all actors must focus their efforts on attaining the three key strategic targets set by the Peace Implementation Council last year at Brussels.

We should spare no effort to advance the strengthening of State institutions, comprehensive economic reform and the return of refugees and displaced persons. The international community has to remain engaged and must assist in the reconstruction and democratization of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to building an independent, unified, multi-ethnic, multicultural State within its internationally recognized borders.

We are pleased that the Council of Ministers is now functioning quite well, despite the setbacks suffered in the first five months following the November 2000 elections. We are equally pleased that the House of Representatives recently adopted the Permanent Election Law, paving the way for the further democratization of the country. We further urge the Bosnian authorities to fully support and promptly implement the decision by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina granting equal status to all three constituent peoples.

My delegation also notes with interest that there has been a visible improvement concerning the return of refugees, including minority returns. It is encouraging to note that in the first 10 months of 2001, 66,856 minority returns were registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This constitutes an increase of 40 per cent over the same period last year. However, we are concerned that the return of refugees and internally displaced persons has not been evenly implemented in the two entities. This situation has to be addressed to promote the return process further. Existing political

and administrative obstructions to the return process must be overcome effectively and promptly.

Inter-ethnic reconciliation is one of the preconditions that will provide the basis for a stable atmosphere to spur the necessary economic activities, which are crucial to the building of a sustainable Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are delighted that the Bosnian authorities will work closely with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to further strengthen the capacity of the national court to investigate and prosecute cases of lesser war crimes perpetrated during the Bosnian conflict. We maintain that it is important for the Tribunal in the Hague to receive the full cooperation of all the parties concerned in the implementation of its mandate. Major indicted war criminals will have to be dealt with by the Tribunal. The mandate of the Tribunal would not be considered complete if Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and their ilk remain at large. The failure to apprehend 30 publicly indicted perpetrators, including major indicted war criminals, will have serious implications for the process of healing the wounds of the violent conflict and bringing about reconciliation and lasting peace among the ethnic communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We note that the reform process instituted by the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) is well under way and that UNMIBH is expected to complete its core mandate by the end of 2002. We also note the intention of the Secretary-General to let regional actors assume the responsibility of a follow-on mission. We urge the relevant actors to react positively to this so as to ensure a seamless transition. We also note that such a follow-on mission would have to be sanctioned by the Security Council. The follow-on mission should work closely with UNMIBH and learn from its experiences. We note that the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board meeting held early this month in Brussels observed that the follow-on police mission should be closely coordinated with judicial reform. My delegation hopes that the Secretary-General will take this into account in his future report.

The successful establishment of the State Border Service is one of the recent success stories of the peace process. This multi-ethnic law enforcement agency has taken control of 75 per cent of the border of the country, contributing to the promotion of the rule of law and securing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country in a short period of time. We commend the efforts of the Office of the High Representative, UNMIBH, the leadership and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international community in this regard. It should provide a good example of how the peace process could be implemented and augurs well for the future of the country.

The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are aware that they are ultimately responsible for the future of their country. Further strenuous efforts on the part of the Bosnian leadership, as well as the population, are therefore pivotal and they have to be commended for the achievements made so far. Together with the international community, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to overcome the critical remaining challenges so that peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be irreversible and so that the country can emerge from the current protective care of the international community.

It is our earnest hope that the recent developments in the region will augur well for a speedier implementation of the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that all its neighbours will continue to support and cooperate with Bosnia and Herzegovina in realizing the full implementation of the Peace Agreement.

For its part, Malaysia is proud to have been associated with the efforts to rebuild peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both the Malaysian Government and the private sector have taken a keen interest and participated in the economic rehabilitation and infrastructure reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Malaysia is also making available, under its Technical Cooperation Programme, training and other facilities. We have also shared our experiences in the field of socio-economic development, including in the area of privatization, that have been successfully implemented in Malaysia.

We will continue to participate in the International Police Task Force, in the Peace Implementation Council and in the work carried out by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations. In spite of the enormous challenges that lie ahead, we are confident that, given the continued support of the international community, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to rise

from the conflict of the past and to forge a viable and united multi-ethnic nation.

Mrs. Marcus (United States): The United States is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.65 on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We view this year's text as symbolic in many ways of what has been achieved over the past six years. It is a substantially shorter but more focused text that reflects the challenges facing the people and leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the years ahead.

The tasks are well known to us all: the return of refugees; economic reform; a streamlined and unified military and defence establishment; justice with regard to war crimes; and the development of effective State institutions.

The draft resolution makes clear that the responsibility for addressing these issues lies first and foremost with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their leaders. The United States remains committed to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and to working with those who have the political will to follow through on the enormous progress that has been made since the signing of the Dayton accords.

In this regard, we are encouraged by the actions taken by the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to address the problem of terrorism in the wake of the murderous attack on the World Trade Center just over three months ago. What has come through loud and clear in their ongoing efforts is the unwavering political commitment to effect a responsible policy that is responsive to this most serious threat facing not only the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but each and every one of us around the world. The efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leadership to step up to its international responsibilities in this struggle are laudable, particularly given the gaps in capabilities that have been revealed in the process.

The draft resolution takes particular note, for example, of the substantial progress that has been made and the continued efforts that are still needed in organizing the State Border Service. We are pleased that all seem to be committed to doing what needs to be done.

The United States remains committed to working with other Member States and organizations and with Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to identify how we can best channel our help in the coming years.

Mr. Šahović (Yugoslavia): The current deliberations on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina are taking place in an atmosphere and context much more favourable than were previously the case. This is due to several factors. First and foremost is the gradual internal stabilization in the country over the past few years. The international community, in particular the High Representative and the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the efforts of other involved organizations played a significant role in this respect. Of equal importance has been the general improvement of conditions in the region. An important contributing element has been the fact that the States of the region have taken concrete steps to improve bilateral relations, which had a positive impact throughout the area and on each country, including Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Indeed, the primary objective of my Government in the past year has been the establishment of good relations with our neighbours based on general cooperation and mutual respect, as well as on respect for the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence. Particularly good results in that regard have been achieved in our relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have advanced from discussions on general political issues to a phase of concrete cooperation in areas of particular interest for their citizens. The aim has been to enable the peoples of our two countries to facilitate mutual contacts and communication.

In this connection, let me point out some of the steps Yugoslavia has taken to broaden and strengthen cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only a few days ago, President Koštunica visited Sarajevo and took part in the first session of the Inter-State Cooperation Council, established at the level of State presidents to promote cooperation and improve contacts between the institutions of the two countries.

During the visit, an understanding was reached on the need to coordinate activities related to the problem of terrorism as well as in the field of regional cooperation. In addition, agreements were signed on the protection and promotion of investments and on customs cooperation and mutual assistance. It is expected that an agreement on the abolition of visas and travel documents will also be signed soon. Furthermore, steps are being taken to resolve outstanding border issues between Yugoslavia and

Bosnia and Herzegovina. To that end, the Inter-State Diplomatic Commission has been established and has commenced its work.

The visit and the agreements represent only some of the very extensive exchanges between Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina since the establishment of diplomatic relations a year ago. A number of high-level meetings have been held since, and, in addition to those just mentioned, several other bilateral accords in various fields have been concluded.

As a part of this process, the Special Parallel Relationship Agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Republika Srpska was signed in March this year with the consent of the High Representative. The purpose of the Agreement is to strengthen and diversify the overall ties between Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The basis for cooperation thus far, and for the future development of relations between our two countries, was and will remain the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords. My country is committed to full respect for and consistent implementation of this agreement.

Notwithstanding the general progress, one serious issue remains in large measure unresolved — the return of refugees and displaced persons. Although the return record in Bosnia and Herzegovina is better than those in some other parts of the region, the results are still unsatisfactory, which adversely affects many thousands of individuals and families. Therefore, Yugoslavia has initiated a project for the return of smaller groups of refugees of all three ethnicities — Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs — to their original place of residence where their return appears to be possible at this time. In addition, we have proposed a trilateral agreement among Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia on refugee return.

Considering the humanitarian nature and importance of this issue, as well as the slow pace of dealing with the problem thus far, Yugoslavia believes that a full and comprehensive solution can be reached by way of agreement among the three countries — all the more so as relations among them have improved and preconditions have been created to address speedily and fully the issue of refugee return.

The question of refugee return is only one of the issues that demonstrate clearly the need for a more comprehensive regional approach to the situation in South-Eastern Europe. Over the years, efforts have been made to contain problems or ease tensions in various parts of the region. However, the overall picture has not always been taken into account. Yet many of the problems are regional in nature and require regional solutions.

There is an evident willingness on the part of the countries of South-Eastern Europe to enhance mutual cooperation. In addition, all of them aspire to join Europe sooner or later. An integrated concept of development will go a long way towards helping them achieve that goal. It is within this broad context that Yugoslavia intends to continue to develop relations with its neighbours, including Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): Six years after Dayton, we are witnessing a wide range of positive developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Let me join previous speakers in paying tribute to the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the High Representative, Mr. Petritsch; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Klein; and all men and women working with them to implement the peace agreement.

During the last year, the general situation in the country became more stable and secure. The multi-ethnic Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established after the general elections of November 2000, has already proved its commitment to cooperate closely with the international community in order to develop a democratic, united and multi-ethnic society.

Important signs of progress are visible in the further strengthening of the State institutions and the establishment of the rule of law. Significant achievements include the improvement of inter-entity and regional police corporation, the effective work of the State Border Service and the success in the fight against the traffic in human beings. With regard to the latter, I would like to express our support for the activities of the Special Trafficking Operations Programme and to express my Government's interest in stepping up its interaction with the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in this field.

Another encouraging sphere is the banking sector. By introducing a modern commercial banking system, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a successful contribution to the improvement of the economic situation in the country.

Let me also mention the adoption of the Common Defence Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which contributes to the further development of the country's security and defence identity. In this context, my delegation supports the intention of Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the Partnership for Peace. We hope that a positive response to this intention can provide an important incentive for Bosnia and Herzegovina in taking forward the political and military reform.

In support of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its move towards European integration, the decision of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt the election law became one of the major steps on the road towards the Council of Europe.

As for the economic dimension, we are confident that the advancement of economic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina should continue to be a key element of the international community's strategy. At the same time, we should be realistic. Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to face serious economic difficulties until structural reform is implemented. My delegation welcomes the decisions taken by the High Representative in pursuit of economic reforms in the financial, labour and pension sectors to create a favourable environment for the effective functioning of industry and trade and in promoting the privatization process.

While noting the remarkable progress on the return of refugees over the last year, we believe that more should be done to ensure the conditions for their safe return and for the equality of their human rights. The Ukrainian national minority constitutes the fourth largest ethnic group in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Along with other people, the Ukrainians experienced considerable suffering during the war. However, the latest report on human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted by José Cutileiro, Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, shows that ensuring the rights of persons belonging to ethnic minorities remains an issue of particular concern. We believe that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina will do their utmost to improve the conditions for their national, political and cultural revival in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From our standpoint, further progress in the political and economic reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina will depend on three major factors. First, there will be no visible breakthrough unless the State entities and local officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina take the primary responsibility for strengthening multi-ethnic society in the country. The rule of law is the basis for further democratic transformation. Secondly, it is obvious that the failure of international efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina would have an immediate and dramatic impact on the whole region. In that regard, we believe that the international community should continue its involvement in the country. Thirdly, we believe that the way towards inter-ethnic reconciliation and the development of stable and democratic State institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in thorough implementation of the European road map for the country. We call upon the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to follow that guideline actively.

Finally, my delegation supports the intention of the Secretary-General, and the efforts of his Special Representative, Mr. Klein, to complete the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, and to transfer its activities to regional actors. Such a transition will provide the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an important political and practical impetus. From our standpoint, it fully corresponds to the policy of Europeanization of the country, thus fostering its political and economic recovery. In that regard, my country supports the objectives and methodology elaborated for a follow-on mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and expresses its readiness to make its own contribution to the fulfilment of the mission's task.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an issue of special importance to my Government. The fact that Croats represent one of the three constituent peoples of the neighbouring State is far from being the only reason. The stability of the region and, as a direct consequence, its prosperity cannot be achieved without a stable and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For most of the last decade, Croatia was trying to find the most appropriate policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, but with varying results. With the current Government, elected in January 2000, relations between the two countries improved substantially, with transparency being the guiding principle. Croatia's assistance to Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina changed in terms both of method and of substance. It

became transparent and oriented towards economic, cultural and social programmes.

The new coalition Government in Sarajevo gave fresh impetus to that process. The latest high-level meeting between representatives of the two countries, which was recently held in Zagreb, proved that this process is on the right track and that much can be achieved through open and sincere dialogue. Following the meeting, both delegations expressed their satisfaction with the discussion and with its results.

One of the results of that meeting was the signing of the agreement on the return of refugees, one of the issues of crucial importance to the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have developed very substantial cooperation in this field. The Croatian Government will continue to provide financial assistance for the return of Croatian refugees to Bosnia and Herzegovina. That assistance will also enable the return of Croatian citizens of Serbian origin to their homes in Croatia, thus contributing to easing the problem at the regional level.

For the first time, Croatia, the Republika Srpska and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will participate together, contributing $150,000 each, in rebuilding a Croatian village in Posovina. We urge the authorities in Banja Luka to expedite the process of the return of refugees to other parts of the Republika Srpska where the process of return is still far from satisfactory.

The coming year will most probably bring the closure of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At this juncture, I would like to commend the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jacques Klein, and the people working with him in the very daunting task of building a professional police force, thereby contributing to the establishment of the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The introduction of the State Border Service proved to be timely and efficient, especially when it comes to dealing with various forms of illegal trafficking. Croatia's longest border is the one shared with Bosnia and Herzegovina, so we take a special interest in the existence of effective measures capable of putting an end to all illegal activities.

We support the exit strategy for the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the proposals in the Secretary-General's report on how to proceed with police reforms in the post-United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina setting. We hope that regional organizations capacitated to continue this task will take over from the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and bring this process to a successful end.

Turning to the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we welcome the outcome of the Peace Implementation Council meeting held in Brussels two weeks ago. For a long time, together with many other nations and organizations, we advocated the streamlining of the international community's efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Too much energy and too many financial assets were unintentionally being misplaced or misused, and too many unnecessary misunderstandings were created due to the fact that the role of coordinator for the international community did not exist. We hope that this new pillar will better work to the benefit of both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the efficiency of the international community.

We support the work of High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch and would like to assure him that he can count on our assistance.

There has been a lot of debate lately about the Dayton Agreement and whether it has become redundant or still has a purpose. Croatia, as one of the parties signing the Agreement and as one of the guarantors of its implementation, certainly believes that it has something to contribute to those discussions. We consider that the Dayton Agreement ultimately brought peace and stability to the country and laid down the necessary — and, at the time, the only realistic — institutional framework. We of course prefer to see Dayton as part of a dynamic process, one that is capable of addressing new challenges with new means, having as a goal a sustainable and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that respect, we attach special importance to the implementation of the decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the sovereignty of all three constituent peoples throughout the entire territory of the country, in all the entities.

Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is one of the obligations undertaken by the parties that signed

the Dayton Agreement. A major breakthrough has definitely been made with the arrest of Slobodan Milosevic and with the indictments raised against him for the crimes committed in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The indictment for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which includes charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, will bring justice for the victims and also serve to help to discover the truth about events in the former Yugoslavia. Consequently, it will ultimately benefit reconciliation among the people of the region.

On a more sombre note, we simply cannot comprehend that two most-wanted indictees — Karadjic and Mladic — are still at large. We sincerely hope that their time is running out and that those who are in a position to arrest them will finally do so. There can be no sustainable Bosnia and Herzegovina with Karadjic and Mladic at large.

Positive processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been outnumbering negative ones for some years already, and we are convinced that there is no turning back. These results have been accomplished through joint endeavours and the concentrated efforts of the international community and of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We have reached a time when the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina seem to be ready to take on more responsibility on their own shoulders and continue on the path towards the achievement of a self-sustainable State capable of providing a good life for its citizens and integration in the European neighbourhood and institutions. As a first step in this direction, we strongly advocate and support the early admission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Council of Europe.

As a good neighbour, Croatia will continue to do its utmost to continue to build ever-better and broader relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina — relations that will benefit the peoples of both countries and the stability of the region as a whole.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.65. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.65?

Draft resolution A/56/L.65 was adopted (resolution 56/215).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 40.

Agenda item 52

Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986

The President: It is my understanding that, after the necessary consultations, consideration of this item may be deferred to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of the item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 52.

Agenda item 53

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

The President: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 53.

Agenda item 54

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The President: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 54.

Agenda item 55

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

The President: It is my understanding that there is no request to consider this item at the present session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration to the fifty-seventh session and to include this item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 55.

Agenda item 56

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

The President: May I take it that it is the Assembly's wish to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 56.

Agenda item 57

Questions of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The President: It is my understanding that, after the necessary consultations, consideration of this item may be deferred to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 57.

Agenda items 59 and 60

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Letter from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (A/56/704)

The President: In his letter, the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya recalls that the item on the elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic impulsion is considered biennially and that the General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session, in its resolution 56/6 of 6 October 2000, decided to include the item in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session.

However, as indicated in the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, paragraph 11 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 55/285 of 7 September 2001 reads as follows:

> "The following item shall continue to be considered biennially at even-numbered sessions: 'Elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion'".

It is my understanding that the reference to even-numbered sessions is a technical error and that the paragraph should have indicated instead that the item would continue to be considered at odd-numbered sessions, in keeping with the previous decisions of the General Assembly.

In order to correct paragraph 11 of the annex to resolution 55/285, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include the item entitled "Elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion" in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and to continue to consider the item at odd-numbered sessions?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 59 and 60.

Agenda item 21 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.66)

Amendment (A/56/L.67)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Romania to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.66.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): I have the honour to take the floor in my capacity as representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and to introduce to the General Assembly draft resolution A/56/L.66, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", on behalf of the 29 sponsors named in that document, namely Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and my own country, Romania.

In addition, the following States have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uzbekistan, Thailand and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

On the eve of the completion of our chairmanship of the OSCE, allow me to recall that Romania served in that office in a year during which we have witnessed dramatic changes in the political and security environment, both within the OSCE area and at the global level. Following the barbaric attacks of 11 September, the main concern of the OSCE and of its current chairmanship inevitably became the war against terrorism. Consequently, the OSCE promptly echoed the resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly in condemning terrorism as the most dangerous threat to our system of security and stability. Thus, the meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe adopted on 4 December 2001 a broad-ranging plan of action for combating terrorism, reflecting the shared views of OSCE member countries and their will to cooperate both among themselves and with other international organizations and institutions in fighting this modern-day plague. In our opinion, that fact and the idea behind it represent a new and interesting concept that is reflected in the draft resolution on which the Assembly will take action today.

The draft resolution retains the structure and methodology of similar texts in past years. At the same time, it seeks to stay in tune with the language of the OSCE ministerial declaration and ministerial decision adopted by consensus at Bucharest. Hence, we shall make only a few very brief comments.

The draft resolution underlines the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE by introducing new methods of consultation, joint planning and common action, and at the same time welcomes efforts aimed at strengthening the organization's efficiency and at fostering its role as a forum for political dialogue on issues of security and cooperation in Europe. As in the texts adopted in previous years, the main part of the draft resolution provides information on developments in the OSCE region over the past year, especially as regards regional conflicts where the United Nations too is actively involved.

In that regard, the draft resolution underlines the active involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its commitment to continue to contribute to the consolidation of peace and stability in the area. It welcomes the establishment and the work of the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It expresses its appreciation for the contribution by the OSCE to implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), in particular for its substantial role in the preparation and organization of the Kosovo-wide election on 17 November 2001. It salutes the commitment of States participating in the OSCE to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unitary character of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It supports the priorities of the work of the OSCE for the continuous development of civil society and increasing local ownership of the reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It commends the efforts to improve the coordination and efficiency of international engagement in the field of civilian implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords.

Regarding other areas of conflict and tension that still exist and that constitute areas of concern shared by the United Nations and the OSCE, the draft resolution refers to efforts undertaken in 2001 towards negotiation for a comprehensive political settlement of the Transdniestrian issue, based on full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, and welcomes the fulfilment by the Russian Federation, ahead of the agreed time, of the commitments undertaken at the OSCE summit held in Istanbul in 1999. The draft resolution welcomes the developments in the peace process in Tshkhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, and the progress made in 2001 towards meeting the commitments made in Istanbul on the future of Russian forces in Georgia.

The draft resolution acknowledges the significant contribution to stability and confidence in the region made by the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation along the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. It notes with satisfaction the engagement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe towards cooperation with the five participating States of Central Asia.

The draft resolution reaffirms that the prompt resolution of the protracted Nagorny-Karabakh conflict will contribute to lasting peace, security, stability and cooperation in the South Caucasus region.

I cannot conclude without expressing my delegation's gratitude for the assistance received from the Secretariat and from the other members of the OSCE Troika — Austria and Portugal — during the entire year and in the preparation of the draft resolution before the Assembly. I would also like to express my thanks to all delegations that participated in the consultation process for their suggestions, understanding and patience, which were all necessary to the success of our drafting exercise.

The President: I call on the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/56/L.66, contained in document A/56/L.67.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): Allow me to call attention to an issue that is of exceptional importance to my nation, namely draft resolution A/56/L.66, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (OSCE). The core of the matter directly concerns the highest interests of my country: its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Unfortunately, this year's draft resolution, like last year's, fails to accommodate my country's deepest concerns. Its paragraph 21, although it relates to the problem, is not in the direct context of the agenda item under consideration, namely cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. Regrettably, our appropriate proposal to add United Nations consensus language to draft resolution A/56/L.66, which would have made the draft resolution balanced, was rejected.

With no other choice before it, our delegation has been compelled to propose an amendment formally; it is contained in document A/56/L.67. In 1994, consensus language virtually the same as that of the amendment I am now introducing was adopted without a vote by the entire Assembly in this very Hall as paragraph 8 of resolution 49/13, bearing the identical title, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe".

It is relevant to recall that 50 Member States — namely Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein,

Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uzbekistan — co-sponsored documents A/49/L.20 and A/49/L.20/Add.1, which contained this very same wording.

Nothing has changed since that time. Today, at the end of 2001, the reasons for proposing this amendment are the same, and still pressing. Unfortunately, it is 20 per cent of Azerbaijani land, not Armenian land, that remains under foreign occupation. It is my country, not Armenia, that must defend itself and struggle for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is my country, not Armenia, that has been dealing with some 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons — the victims of ethnic cleansing.

Accordingly, the amendment is not new and repeats exactly the same language that was adopted by the General Assembly at its previous six sessions.

The amendment directly reflects the position taken and the language used by the international community, primarily by the Security Council in its resolutions on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict — resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993); by the General Assembly itself, in resolutions 49/13, 51/57, 52/22, 53/85, 54/117 and 55/179; and by the Secretary-General in his relevant reports: A/50/564, A/52/450, A/53/672, A/54/537, A/55/98 and A/56/125.

By checking these documents, one can easily establish the fact that all three principal organs of the United Nations have consistently and unequivocally reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country and have emphasized that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Over the past five years, Armenia has been the only State to vote against our amendment, although Armenia itself joined the aforementioned consensus and agreed on that particular language.

From this lofty rostrum, I appeal to all Member States to support the just cause of my country, thereby reaffirming the principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to vote in favour of our amendment, as contained in document A/56/L.67.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.66 and the amendment thereto, contained in document A/56/L.67.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Marcus (United States of America): The three co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Russian Federation, France and the United States, taking into consideration their role in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, have decided to abstain on any amendment to the text prepared by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

At the same time, our abstention in no way changes our commitment to helping the parties achieve a settlement through negotiation based on mutual compromise, with the understanding that the principle of territorial integrity, as well as other important United Nations and OSCE principles, will continue to be respected.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), contained in document A/56/L.66, is the result of lengthy negotiations at OSCE headquarters in Vienna and New York among all OSCE member States and reflects a consensus among them, including Armenia and Azerbaijan, on the conflicts in Europe dealt with by the OSCE.

Operative paragraph 21 of draft resolution A/56/L.66, which deals with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, is no exception in this regard. It contains language agreed upon by all parties to the conflict and by the co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group — France, the Russian Federation and the United States, the body immediately responsible for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Operative paragraph 21 is also entirely based on the relevant paragraphs of the statement of the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted by consensus in Bucharest on 5 December 2001. That particular paragraph best reflects concerns as to the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh

and the current status of the negotiations in that respect. It is therefore illogical for one of the parties to the conflict, which had already joined the consensus on operative paragraph 21, to break with this consensus in the General Assembly and to try to amend the agreed draft in such a way that it predetermines the outcome of the ongoing peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and virtually forces the Member States of the United Nations to take sides in a conflict which is still the subject of negotiations.

Unfortunately, to try to make this agreed language any better can only make things worse for the whole negotiating process. The amendment proposed by Azerbaijan, which is contained in document A/56/L.67, is one-sided, biased and imposes a compulsory framework which Armenia cannot agree to. This amendment, in fact, rejects the language proposed by the Chairman-in-Office.

We view the preservation of the language presented by Romania as an important issue. We see such an amendment as an inappropriate move, since the OSCE is the sole mandated and authoritative body dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For that and other obvious reasons, the sponsors did not find it appropriate to include the amendment proposed by Azerbaijan in draft resolution A/56/L.66.

We strongly believe that, through a last-minute amendment to the agreed draft resolution and by breaking with the consensus, Azerbaijan is obviously attempting to benefit and to achieve its own aims. Such an approach contradicts the spirit of the United Nations and of the OSCE.

Armenia therefore will vote against the proposed amendment.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.66 and on the amendment thereto, contained in document A/56/L.67.

In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the amendment is voted on first.

The Assembly shall therefore take a decision first on the amendment circulated in document A/56/L.67.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, Djibouti, Ecuador, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Yemen.

Against:

Armenia.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

The amendment was adopted by 34 votes to 1, with 85 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Guyana informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.67, as amended.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Armenia, Belarus, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania.

Draft resolution A/56/L.66, as amended, was adopted by 123 votes to none, with 4 abstentions (resolution 56/216).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Guyana informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt for an explanation of vote. May I remind him that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ragab (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to explain the vote of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.67. Following a detailed examination of the amendment, the delegation of Egypt found it more appropriate to support the text introduced by the coordinator on the item for the following reasons.

First, the text is in line with the Declaration issued at the 1999 Istanbul Summit, in which the parties involved in the conflict participated, and with the text adopted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 28 November 2000. Secondly, the resolution concerns cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE and should not be used for decision-making on regional disputes and conflicts. Thirdly, the text does not reflect a position in favour of either party to the conflict. It merely encourages the efforts of the OSCE to establish trust between both parties.

For these reasons, the delegation of Egypt abstained in the voting on the amendment submitted. However, we wish to state clearly that Egypt's vote today does not affect its position vis-à-vis the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 21 and of agenda item 21 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/56/L.64)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Belgium to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.64.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour, on behalf of the European Union and the other co-sponsors, to introduce the draft resolution on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and

protection of United Nations personnel, contained in document A/56/L.64.

Since the publication of that document, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Chad, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Poland, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

The draft resolution being submitted today by the European Union for consideration by the General Assembly is a balanced document that takes into account the observations made during the informal consultations which we organized. I wish to present some of the elements contained in the draft resolution.

The text reflects the concern of the sponsors over the increasingly difficult context in which humanitarian assistance takes place in some areas, in particular the continuous erosion, in many cases, of respect for the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. It commends the courage and commitment of those who take part, often at great personal risk, in humanitarian operations, especially of locally recruited staff. It strongly condemns all incidents in many parts of the world where humanitarian personnel were deliberately targeted and expresses profound regret at the deaths of all United Nations and other personnel involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

The text recalls that primary responsibility under international law for the security and protection of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel lies with the Government hosting a United Nations operation. The draft resolution recalls that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court qualifies as a war crime any deliberate attack against personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission. The role that the Court could play in bringing to justice those responsible for such acts is also mentioned. Given the importance it attaches to the early implementation of the Statute of the Court, the European Union welcomes the fact that the General Assembly calls upon all States to consider becoming parties to the Statute.

Furthermore, the text reaffirms that ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel constitutes an underlying duty of the Organization, which must be based on a necessary cost-sharing arrangement with the relevant agencies, funds and programmes within the United Nations system. In addition, it is necessary to allocate adequate and predictable resources for this purpose. The text also emphasizes the need to ensure that all United Nations staff members receive adequate security training.

In addition, the draft resolution requests the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator to continue to play a central role in this area. The Office of the Coordinator should also be reinforced, and a full-time Coordinator, at the appropriate level, should be appointed. Both at Headquarters and in the field, coordination and cooperation between the United Nations security management system and non-governmental organizations should be enhanced in order to find answers to common security questions that arise in the field. The draft resolution also insists on the need to develop a culture of accountability at all levels throughout the United Nations system.

As far as the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel is concerned, the sponsors are aware that priority must be given to its universalization. They welcome the creation of an ad hoc committee that will consider the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on measures to strengthen and enhance the protective legal regime for United Nations and associated personnel.

Finally, the resolution includes this item on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report.

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly this year to the United Nations and to its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. This reminds us, more than ever, of the central role played by the Organization with respect to peace. It should encourage us to take action in order to allow its personnel to carry out their noble task under the best possible conditions, so that the banner of the United Nations will no longer be a target, but rather a guarantee of protection.

Allow me to conclude by paying tribute once again to all humanitarian personnel who, every day, carry out such vital humanitarian tasks in the field. They deserve the full support of all Member States.

Bearing in mind the importance it places on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the protection of United Nations personnel, the European Union would like this resolution to be, as in the past, adopted by consensus.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.64.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I have a fairly lengthy statement on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution.

I should like to inform members that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.64, under the terms of operative paragraphs 23 and 24 of the draft resolution, the Assembly would reaffirm the need to strengthen the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and in this regard would reiterate the need for the appointment of a full-time Security Coordinator, at the appropriate level, so as to enable the Office to enhance its capacity in the discharge of its duties, in consultation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and appropriate agencies within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and would call for the expeditious consideration of the recommendation that is included in operative paragraph 23.

The Assembly also would recognize the need for a strengthened and comprehensive security management system for the United Nations system, both at the Headquarters and field levels, and would request the United Nations system, as well as Member States, to take all appropriate measures needed to that end, as included in operative paragraph 24.

In connection with the above-mentioned operative paragraphs, it should be noted that, in the context of agenda item 123, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003", the Secretary-General — in his report to the General Assembly on the implementation of section II of General Assembly resolution 55/238 of 23 December 2000, entitled "Safety and security of United Nations personnel", contained in document A/56/469 — has submitted comprehensive proposals for the strengthening, effective the year 2002, of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator at Headquarters and the security arrangements in the field, to improve safety and security of United Nations system personnel operating in the field. The proposals set forth in that report were finalized on the basis of the inter-agency agreement reached within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination with respect to the operation and financial arrangements for the new safety and security system for United Nations personnel, including sharing of the relating costs by the organizations participating in the new system. A proposal for the appointment of the United Nations Security Coordinator on a full-time basis at the Assistant Secretary-General level has also been put forward in the context of that report.

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of section II of General Assembly resolution 55/238, and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in document A/56/619, are currently under review by the Fifth Committee in the context of agenda item 123. Upon review of those reports, the Fifth Committee will submit its recommendations to the General Assembly in accordance with established procedure. On that basis, adoption of draft resolution A/56/L.64 would entail no costs over and above those already proposed by the Secretary-General in the context of his report in document A/56/469.

The President: I now call on the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before a decision is taken. May I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Serwer (United States of America): The United States has long been concerned about the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, and has been a long-time sponsor of the resolutions on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel. We are joining the consensus for the adoption of the draft resolution before us, but we want to make an on-the-record statement regarding the International Criminal Court, inasmuch as it is mentioned in the sixteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 14.

The United States has not ratified the Rome Statute and has no intention of doing so. We have strong objections to the International Criminal Court. We object to the Court's purported exercise of jurisdiction over nationals of States that are not parties to the Court. We also object to the inclusion of the still undefined crime of aggression within the Statute of the Court. We believe the Court's structure lends itself to the great danger of politically motivated prosecutions.

We reaffirm our strong opposition to the establishment of the Court, and we urge all other nations not to ratify the Rome Statute.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position before action is taken.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.64, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

Since the publication of the draft resolution, Côte d'Ivoire has joined the list of sponsoring Member States.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.64?

Draft resolution A/56/L.64 was adopted (resolution 56/217).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 22 (*continued*)

Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Draft resolution (A/56/L.61)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 38th plenary meeting, on 5 November 2001.

I give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.61.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): Before introducing the draft resolution, I would like to make an oral revision to the second line of operative paragraph 4. Please delete, after the number "16", the word "and" and the number "17".

I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". The draft resolution has been sponsored by the following countries: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, China, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Ghana, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Luxembourg, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to operative paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the draft resolution, which refer to the establishment of an ad hoc committee of the whole and the organizational session. Operative paragraph 5 calls for the highest appropriate level of representation during the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 16 September 2002.

It is now my honour, in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of December, to present this statement on behalf of Africa. Members will recall that the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly adopted unanimously the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), following an in-depth final review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex. UN-NADAF represents a unique agreement between African States and the international community, with both sides committing themselves to specific and far-reaching efforts to accelerate Africa's development process.

UN-NADAF was a major arrangement for international cooperation to promote sustainable development in Africa during the 1990s. The programme resulted from the failures of two previous international cooperation arrangements, Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. At its adoption, the programme elicited much excitement and enthusiasm. The late 1980s was a time when the

international community — and especially African countries themselves — was particularly eager to get Africa out of recession and to promote economic growth and development, with the ultimate aim of reducing poverty.

The total income of Africa is just over that of Belgium, but it is divided among 48 countries, with a median gross domestic product of $2 billion. Africa's poor are the poorest of the poor. About half of its 600 million people live on just $0.65 a day.

Many African countries have gone a long way in carrying out their commitment under UN-NADAF. They have carried out macroeconomic reforms, sometimes incurring great political risks and social hardships. Economic reform programmes in Africa were based on incentives for savings, on measures to stimulate investment and on the empowerment of the private sector. In order to promote savings, the financial sector reforms in many African countries have included the strengthening of the regulatory framework and prudent guidelines for banking and non-banking financial institutions intended to safeguard public confidence and streamline operational viability and the effectiveness of the financial sector.

Also, in the effort to promote investment, African Governments have taken actions towards the creation of an enabling environment and the conditions conducive to both domestic and foreign investment. Furthermore, for the empowerment of the private sector, almost all African Governments have embarked on privatization programmes and have enacted laws to create an atmosphere favourable for the private sector's expansion and operation.

The promotion of sustainable development in Africa remains a formidable challenge as we advance into the new millennium. Today poverty eradication remains a critical challenge, as it was in 1990 before the adoption of UN-NADAF. In sub-Saharan Africa the number of people living on less than $1 a day rose from 217.2 million in 1987 to 242.3 million in 1990, and to a record level of 301.6 million in 1998. There are certain chronic problems that must be viewed from new perspectives in order to arrive at innovative strategies for solving them. In particular the issues of external debt, foreign aid, foreign investment and the flow of technology remain very critical.

Also, at the same time, there are new issues that were not prominent or weighty in the first half of the 1990s, when UN-NADAF was adopted. In this connection, for example, we are concerned with the problems of globalization and HIV/AIDS. All these issues need to be effectively considered if Africa is to achieve the international development goals that have been set at various global conferences during the last decade, in particular to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people with incomes of less than $1 day, of people suffering from hunger and people without safe drinking water. Other goals include equal access to all levels of education for girls and boys, the provision of universal primary education, the reduction of maternal mortality by three fourths and of mortality among children under five by two thirds, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases.

We welcome the varied support for this draft resolution that we have received from all development partners that continue to show interest in the development of Africa. We also look forward to their cooperation in the final review of the programme, as planned for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

At this point, I would like to further commend the international community for its support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which African countries have adopted as the most viable strategy for the accelerated and sustainable development of the continent in a globalizing world economy.

Finally, I appeal to all Members of the United Nations to attend the one-day session on 16 September 2002, and give Africa the prominence it deserves and requires.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.61, as orally revised.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen Jian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I would like to inform members of the following in relation to the General Assembly's possible adoption of draft resolution A/56/L.61, as orally revised.

First, in paragraphs 1 to 4 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to establish and ad hoc committee of the whole of the General Assembly and to convene an organizational session in June 2002 for one working day, and would further decide that the ad hoc committee of the whole should meet in

substantive session for a period of five working days, from 9 to 13 September 2002, and for three working days, from 7 to 9 October 2002, and would also decide that a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly should be held on 16 September 2002.

Secondly, it is envisaged that the organizational session of the ad hoc committee of the whole would be held for one day, that is, two meetings, and the substantive session for eight days, that is, 16 meetings, for a combined total of 18 meetings. Interpretation would be provided in all six official languages. The overall documentation requirements of the committee would be processed in the six official languages, and are estimated at 150 pages for the pre-session, 25 pages for the in-session and 50 pages for the post-session needs.

Thirdly, it should be noted that the majority of the meetings of the committee are scheduled to take place during the main part of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Therefore, should the General Assembly authorize those meetings, it would constitute an exception to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, which stipulates that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

Fourthly, the conference servicing requirements for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly planned for 16 September 2002 will be taken out of the overall allotment for the regular session of the General Assembly.

Fifthly, the conference servicing requirements for the meetings of the committee in 2002, at full cost, are estimated at $282,000.

Sixthly, in that regard, the extent to which the Organization's permanent capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences and meetings for the 2002-2003 biennium. Provision is made, however, in the section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 concerning the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (A/56/6 (Sect.2)), not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years.

In consideration of what I have just said, therefore, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.61, as orally revised, no additional appropriations would be required in the next biennium.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.61, as orally revised. Before we proceed to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.61 the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Cuba and Uruguay.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.61, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/56/L.61, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 56/218).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 22.

Agenda item 38 (*continued*)

Assistance in mine action

Draft resolution (A/56/L.63/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 60th and 61st plenary meetings, held on 21 November 2001.

I call on the representative of Belgium to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.63/Rev.1.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour on behalf of the European Union and other sponsors to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.63/Rev.1, entitled "Assistance in mine action". Since that document was issued, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Jordan, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, New Zealand, Seychelles, South Africa, Suriname, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

The draft resolution, which the European Union is today introducing for the consideration of the

General Assembly, is a balanced one which accommodates comments made in the course of the informal consultations we conducted. Let me briefly touch on some of the points contained in the draft resolution.

First, the draft resolution considers mine action to be an important component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities. In the text, the sponsors call for the continuation of the efforts of the United Nations, with the assistance of States and institutions, to foster the establishment of national mine-action capacities in countries where mines constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts. The draft resolution encourages all relevant multilateral and national programmes and bodies to include activities related to mine action in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities. It emphasizes again the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine-action activities, and especially the role of the Mine Action Service of the Secretariat.

The draft resolution notes with appreciation the mine-action strategy covering the period 2001-2005 presented by the Secretary-General and requests him to optimize it, inter alia, by taking into account the views of Member States. The text likewise notes with appreciation the development of the International Mine Action Standards and of an information management policy for mine action presented by the Secretary-General. The draft resolution welcomes the development of an Electronic Mine Information Network to support the role of the United Nations.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the provisions of the draft resolution.

In view of the importance we attach to assistance in mine action and to the overall problem of mines, the European Union hopes that the draft resolution will, like similar texts in previous years, be adopted by consensus.

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.63/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.63/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/56/L.63/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 56/219).

The President: Before calling on representatives wishing to speak in explanation of position, let me remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now call on representatives wishing to speak in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China understands the international community's humanitarian concern over indiscriminate injuries to innocent civilians caused by mines, and it supports the international community's humanitarian efforts to resolve the problem. The Chinese Government expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General, to the Mine Action Service of the Secretariat and to other relevant United Nations agencies for their outstanding work in humanitarian mine clearance.

In recent years China has actively cooperated with the United Nations and other organizations, and has actively participated in international assistance in mine action. China has carefully studied the United Nations International Mine Action Standards, and will participate in future efforts to revise mine clearance standards on the basis of its own mine clearance practices and experience, with a view to improving this work and to enabling the standards to better meet the needs of developing countries.

The question of mines involves international concerns, as well as the legitimate self-defence needs of sovereign States. Those two aspects should be addressed in a balanced manner. It is necessary to avoid one-sidedness. This year's United Nations mine-action strategy covering the period 2001-2005 advocates the complete prohibition of mines. That does not accord with China's consistent position on mines. In our view, as they provide assistance in mine action and, especially, as they formulate future five-year United Nations mine-action strategies, the relevant United Nations agencies should focus on how to help the countries concerned resolve their mine problems, addressing both humanitarian and security concerns related to mines. But they should not convert mine-

action assistance activities into activities promoting the complete prohibition of mines.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation joined in the consensus on the draft resolution entitled "Assistance in mine action", contained in document A/56/L.63/Rev.1. We would like to thank the sponsors of this resolution for having accepted the amendments to operative paragraph 1, which takes note of the Secretary-General's recommendations on mine action, contained in document A/56/482.

The report is very important indeed because of the information contained therein. Nonetheless, I have certain reservations, because the report focuses on recently laid mines and not on mines that have been in place for a long time, such as the millions of mines in my country. These mines have, since the Second World War, caused the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians and continue to represent a major threat. In addition, these mines have caused great damage to property and have impeded efforts to stop desertification and facilitate land reclamation.

My delegation has already made reference to the problem of mines in my country. We hope that the United Nations will devote its full attention to old mines. Indeed, a United Nations mission visited Libya recently and came to the conclusion that the Axis forces had planted millions of mines in my country. However, the report submitted during this session — like last year's report — focused only on recently laid mines.

That is why my delegation believes that it must once again voice certain reservations. It also expresses the hope that the Secretary-General will adopt a broader approach and strategies at future sessions, particularly as concerns the 2001-2005 strategy.

We would like to draw the attention of the international community to the fact that old mines are no less dangerous than more recent ones. Both cause incalculable suffering. That is why the international community should step up its efforts to deal with them in the same manner as with more recently placed mines.

Mr. Requejo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba has this year once again joined the consensus on the draft resolution on assistance in mine action, contained in document A/56/L.63/Rev.1.

Our support for the draft reflects our genuine desire to contribute, to the extent possible, to addressing the humanitarian consequences of the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We would also like to emphasize that, as is well known, we continue to take a firm stance on the safety component in the context of the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

Cuba believes that anti-personnel landmines continue to be a legitimate means of defending our country against external aggression and of protecting our borders. The resolution that we have adopted today reflects a very delicate balance. In order to guarantee that this consensus is maintained in future, it is important to continue taking into account legitimate national security concerns with respect to the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

I should like to conclude by thanking the delegation of Belgium for the transparent and professional manner in which it coordinated the negotiations on this item, which contributed to a great extent to the achievement of a resolution acceptable to all.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt joined the consensus on draft resolution A/56/L.63/Rev.1 on assistance in mine action. In this connection, we would like to make the following points.

Egypt accords particular importance to assistance in mine action, given the presence of approximately 23 million landmines in Egyptian territory and their serious consequences for the people of my country. Each year the debate on this draft resolution is held in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action. This year, the report contains a comprehensive strategy for the years 2001-2005, elaborated by the Secretary-General, on assistance in mine action. This strategy is in line with our interest in preserving the consensus by which the report has been adopted since 1993, when it was first submitted.

Our interest in arriving at an annual consensus on this draft resolution is due to the severity of the problem of mines in Egypt, which has 21 per cent of the total number of mines in the world. Thus more than a fifth of the total number of mines laid worldwide are in Egypt.

While we welcome the annual report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action as a means of raising the international community's awareness of the problems posed by landmines, we have numerous reservations in this respect, which we have already discussed with the Secretariat and with interested States.

The most important of these reservations is, first: we have noticed that the report of the Secretary-General — which is one of the means of heightening the international community's awareness concerning the problem of mines — does not take into consideration the problem of mines in Egypt. It contains no reference to this issue, despite the fact that the United Nations mission charged with assessing the problem of mines in Egypt stated in its report that the international community had only a limited awareness of the extent of the problem there. Accordingly, we believe that the Secretary-General should work to heighten the international community's awareness of this problem.

Secondly, we did not have sufficient time to study the comprehensive strategy on mines for 2001-2005 developed by the Secretary-General this year, despite the extent of the severe landmine problem in Egypt.

We had hoped that all interested parties would have enough time to consult it in order to avoid the strategy's pitfalls and thus be able to draft it in such a way as to guarantee its optimal implementation, taking into consideration the requirements and needs of those particularly affected by mines.

Despite all this, we believe that the understanding reached on the controversial paragraphs of the resolution, particularly operative paragraph 11, represents a first step towards rectifying the situation, especially with regard to the directives of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General to optimize the strategy, given the views expressed and taking into consideration the General Assembly's principal call for an assessment of the negative effects of mines on development. Such assessments would take place in the course of and not prior to the strategy's implementation. We express the hope that the Secretary-General's implementation of the General Assembly's directives to improve and optimize the strategy, as mentioned, will be adequately and accurately followed up next year.

In light of all this, my delegation did not hinder the consensus adoption of the resolution, given our ongoing readiness to demonstrate flexibility in consideration of the interests of our development partners and taking into account the specific nature of the problem of mines in Egypt.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 38?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 20 and 43 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(f) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Draft resolution (A/56/L.62)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/56/725)

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Gamaleldin (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Until September 2001, Afghanistan represented one of the great tragedies of the current age. According to United Nations estimates, it had 3 to 5 million citizens classified as "vulnerable". Approximately 3.8 million rural inhabitants were stricken by drought and lived on food assistance from the international community. Until September, that assistance helped to prevent a mass exodus to Pakistan or other neighbouring States. Even so, there are more than 4 million Afghan refugees and 960,000 internally displaced persons.

For 25 years now, the Afghan people has experienced suffering and misery that are not of its making. Its land has been the principal playing field of a great game between many parties that has damaged its territory and killed its citizens, some of whom, regrettably, increased the suffering of their brethren over the past few years by involving them in a gruelling civil war. Some sought to satisfy their own

goals and narrow interests and the country fell into the hands of a narrow-minded and rigid regime without mercy for its people. The scope of the humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan has broadened in the course of the military operations following the terrorist events of September, which have been categorically condemned by the international community.

The problem we have faced since the onset of those military operations has been caused by the cessation of the distribution of food assistance to the rural and outlying areas of Afghanistan because of the deteriorating security situation there, the military operations under way, the closure by neighbouring States of their borders with Afghanistan, the coming of winter, the potential for a fourth year of drought and the meagre resources extended to Afghanistan by donor countries.

Fortunately, as a result of the warning issued by the United Nations, various States have increased their assistance. The United Nations has effectively initiated a regional planning process to evaluate the humanitarian situation with the neighbouring States and to coordinate with them the delivery of assistance to Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons. In that connection, Egypt hails the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and his colleagues for their considerable efforts during this difficult period.

Egypt has become a sponsor of the draft resolution on Afghanistan, submitted by Germany, although we have certain reservations concerning some of its paragraphs. Our co-sponsorship of the draft resolution this year arises from our belief in the need to send a strong message to the Afghan people and its interim Government to the effect that the international community as a whole is seeking a better future for them in which they can resume their positive contribution and role in the progress of the international family. The entire world is prepared to cooperate with the new Government to achieve the better future to which we aspire on behalf of the sisterly Afghan people and which will compensate them for the long, dark years when they disintegrated into warring factions, fighting and the improper practices of the Taliban, which have no relation to the true Islamic religion and its emphasis on peaceful coexistence, human rights and due respect for peoples of diverse cultures and religions. According to Islam, this diversity among peoples and races should lead to positive dialogue and enrich humanity; it should not fan the flames of sedition, conflict and hatred among peoples and nations.

Egypt believes that any discussion of Afghanistan's future must take the following elements into account.

First, the territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be safeguarded. Afghanistan should enjoy good-neighbourly relations with its neighbours and the international community on the basis of mutual respect and adherence to international legitimacy. We received with satisfaction the contents of the Security Council resolution adopted yesterday, emphasizing the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and calling upon all Afghans to cooperate with the international community, as represented by the United Nations, and with the international force that has been constituted in implementation of the commitments and decisions of the Bonn conference.

Secondly, the citizens of Afghanistan themselves should design the new form and optimum pattern of governance in their country to freely serve their own interests. We look forward to the activities to be undertaken by the interim Government in the light of the Agreement reached Bonn.

Thirdly, foreign forces should refrain from any attempt to influence and control the destiny of the Afghan people.

Fourthly, the international community — especially the major Powers and those economically able to do so — should take serious steps to rebuild Afghanistan in such a way as to result in development for the Afghan people and stability, peace and security for this important region of the world.

Fifthly, the forces of terrorism and darkness must be stripped of the ability to use Afghan territory as a launching pad for terrorist acts. The ability to do so would destabilize the region, destroy the interests of people and burn the bridges of understanding between the countries of the region.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the United Nations has a vital and important role to play in meeting the needs of the Afghan people. We all must think about what can be done and what burdens could be shouldered by the United Nations. In that regard, caution is necessary, and the responsibility is enormous.

I wish to commend the efforts exerted by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi in the political sphere. We hope they will yield positive results. Egypt would also like to express its appreciation for the efforts of donor countries to extend humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and help it rebuild. In that regard, we welcome the conclusion of the latest meeting held in Washington for that purpose. We look forward to the outcome of the forthcoming meetings and to the impetus they will provide to the concerted efforts of the international community. Egypt is ready to extend its cooperation and to contribute to this international effort in a way that will reintroduce stability to Afghanistan and compensate its people for those dark years and make it possible for it to regain its positive and effective role in the community of nations.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.62, which has two parts. Part A is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security". Part B is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.62, the following countries have become sponsors: Bhutan, Egypt, Eritrea, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia and Turkmenistan.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.62?

Draft resolution A/56/L.62 was adopted (resolution 56/220 A and B).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43.

Statement by the President

The President: The General Assembly is coming to the close of the main part of its fifty-sixth session. As this is the last meeting over which I will preside this year — with the understanding that one more meeting will be chaired by an Acting President — I would like to share some of my observations and thoughts on what we have achieved so far through our work and deliberations.

As we all know, these have been a very busy and unusual three months for all of us. The General Assembly started its session in a most extraordinary situation, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September. Owing to the rescheduling of the general debate, the special session on children and other events, our work was disrupted and had to be re-organized, but I am pleased to say that we have met that challenge and were not deterred by those unexpected constraints in the pursuit of our common goals of global peace and progress. Indeed, we have devoted ourselves to the tasks before us with unflagging dedication and enthusiasm.

We held our general debate in only seven days, with the participation of 187 delegations, including 41 heads of State and Government, 9 deputy prime ministers and 96 foreign ministers, which required extraordinary arrangements such as extended meeting hours and limited speech time. In that regard, I wish to mention that I have received generally favourable responses from Member States about the newly introduced methods of conducting the general debate.

Prior to that we had five days of plenary meetings devoted to a debate on terrorism, as well as a two-day meeting on the theme of the dialogue among civilizations. Particularly in the context of our pressing concern with terrorism, that dialogue has had special significance in promoting intercultural understanding. As we look back on all those events, the magnitude and intensity of our work are reflected in the statistics. Since 12 September, by the time of recess the General Assembly will have considered 143 items of a total of 177 agenda items and adopted 292 resolutions on them.

Among the many important issues we have addressed, combating terrorism was perhaps the highest priority. The General Assembly reacted swiftly to the events of 11 September by adopting a strong resolution — resolution 56/1 — and reaffirmed its determination to fight international terrorism through the week-long debate on measures to eliminate international terrorism, in which a record number of Member States participated.

Progress has also been made in strengthening the legal framework against international terrorism through

the work of the Sixth Committee. The General Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a draft comprehensive convention as a matter of urgency and urged States that had not yet done so to consider, as a matter of priority, and also in accordance with the pertinent Security Council resolution, becoming parties to relevant conventions and protocols.

Being the first session of the General Assembly after the historic Millennium Assembly of last year, our meetings made major advances in carrying out and following up the Millennium Declaration. The Assembly noted with appreciation the road map report of the Secretary-General, dated 6 September 2001, and recommended that the road map be considered a useful guide in the implementation of the Declaration by the United Nations system. The Secretary-General has been requested to prepare an annual report and a quinquennial comprehensive report on progress achieved by the United Nations system and Member States towards implementing the Declaration.

In the area of disarmament and international security, the terrorist attacks of 11 September had an important impact on our deliberations. Delegates strengthened their efforts in pursuit of real and substantive disarmament measures aimed at making the world a safer place for all mankind. In the course of the discussions in the nuclear field, a number of Member States continued to stress that nuclear weapons posed a threat to mankind and that the best way to deal with that would be through the total elimination of such weapons. At the same time, Member States called for stricter controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as to prevent such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists. Issues concerning other weapons of mass destruction were also addressed with a renewed sense of urgency and recognition of the danger of proliferation. As for conventional weapons, emphasis was placed on the positive outcome of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

On the economic and social fronts, the Assembly faced a challenging task in dealing with various issues, with much of the global attention focused on the fight against terrorism and the world economy moving perilously close to a global recession. Given those difficult overall conditions, I am pleased with the progress that has been made in a number of important areas.

At the beginning of the session, we placed great hope in the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization that was to be held in Doha in November to re-energize global trade as an engine for growth and development. We were not disappointed. The outcome of that meeting should provide very positive impetus also for the ongoing preparations of both the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Sustainable Development. Those events, considered together, are critical for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and for the achievement of international development targets. The Assembly has taken a number of necessary steps to keep those processes on track and, in particular, has maintained its focus on the eradication of poverty.

In that regard, I am pleased to note the action taken by the Assembly, in fulfilment of a commitment undertaken last May at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to create the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States. Encouraged by the very positive reception by the Assembly of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and by next year's review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the High Representative will, I believe, be in an excellent position to advocate the cause of all least developed countries, so many of which are in Africa.

Sustainable development concerns will be addressed in a comprehensive fashion at the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Johannesburg next year. Now that the Assembly has determined the new date for the event, I encourage all Member States to ensure participation in the Summit at the highest level. The Assembly's work on various environmental conventions as well as the positive outcome of the Marrakesh meeting on climate change are welcome contributions to the preparations for the Summit.

In the field of humanitarian assistance, the Assembly reaffirmed the crucial importance of continuing to strengthen humanitarian coordination and to ensure that such coordination evolves in the light of the changing humanitarian environment. In order to deal with perennial natural disasters, Member States underscored the need for strengthening international cooperation to enhance the national and regional

capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response.

Regarding the situation in Afghanistan, this year marked a turning point in our debate on this issue, which has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1980. In response to the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan, the General Assembly and the Security Council have taken coordinated measures to restore peace and security and to reconstruct that war-ravaged nation. Member States particularly welcomed the establishment of an interim authority, which will lead to the formation of a new Afghanistan Government at a later stage. The efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to promote peace and security in that country were also warmly appreciated by Member States. It is especially commendable that the United Nations has responded promptly and concretely to the massive humanitarian-assistance needs of the Afghan people. I would like to note in particular that the Assembly called on the international community to provide all possible humanitarian assistance as well as post-conflict reconstruction assistance for the Afghan population.

The preparations for the upcoming second World Assembly on Ageing were also given an impetus. Member States are now considering the draft international strategy to result from that gathering. I am also very pleased with the Assembly's growing recognition, in many different areas, of the critical contribution of non-governmental organizations and of civil society in general to the search for solutions to the many challenges we continue to face in economic, social and related fields. The role of the global women's movement has long been highly valued as a driving force behind the efforts of the United Nations to promote the equality and empowerment of women. Multi-stakeholder participation has also become established practice in areas as diverse as health and immunization, the well-being of children and harnessing the potential of information and communications technologies for development. It is noteworthy, therefore, that the Assembly has made good progress this year towards forging global partnerships. I also look forward to the Assembly's contribution to bridging the digital divide.

As we have striven to deal with the many challenges facing this session, I think we were all especially gratified to learn of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize jointly to the United Nations and to its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. Various United Nations agencies have received the prize before, but this was the first time that the United Nations as a whole was thus honoured. Let me reiterate that I believe that the award should be viewed both as recognition of past achievements and as a summons to move forward towards our goals with renewed energy and dedication. Every member of the United Nations family has a share in this unique honour, as well as a share of the added responsibility that comes with it. This is something I felt very keenly when I accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the United Nations earlier this month in Oslo.

If the past 100 days have taught us anything, it is that even the most universal of human values must never be taken for granted. The global community must be constantly alert to threats posed to those values from whatever source they may come. If, as has been said, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, the price of a civilized and humane international order is no less.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all representatives for their constructive participation in our meetings despite the constraints that we faced. Without their resolute determination to achieve our goals in a true spirit of cooperation, the General Assembly would never have come this far. I wish to thank in particular the Vice-Presidents, who have kindly taken my place on many occasions, and the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees, who did excellent work within an extremely tight time frame.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose guidance and advice were indispensable in conducting the business of this Assembly. Mr. Chen Jian and his dedicated staff in the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, as well as my own office staff, have consistently provided top-quality professional assistance. I am immensely grateful to them and to all other members of the Secretariat, including the security officers and interpreters — who must have had an extremely difficult time with me when I spoke very fast — and also to many others whom I have not mentioned.

Let me offer, in conclusion, my very best wishes for the holiday season and for the coming new year. I look forward to our meeting again, revived and refreshed, when we resume our work in 2002.

Postponement of date of recess

The President: Members will recall that, at its 70th plenary meeting on 30 November 2001, the General Assembly decided to postpone the date of recess of the current session to Friday, 21 December 2001.

However, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee that the Committee will not conclude its work until Monday, 24 December. As a consequence, the Assembly will not be able to conclude its work today, 21 December.

I should therefore like to propose to the Assembly that it hold another plenary meeting upon the conclusion of the work of the Fifth Committee for this part of the session on Monday, 24 December, to take action on remaining draft resolutions and to consider the reports of the Fifth Committee.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal?

It was so decided.

The President: The next plenary meeting will therefore be held on Monday, 24 December, at 11 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.